

Gender Implications of Climate Change in Humanitarian Action

Gender and National Adaptation Plans of Action

Introduction

The National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA) is a mechanism developed by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). While information normally is communicated to the Conference of Parties (COP) through national communities, the NAPA mechanism responds to the need of Least Developed Countries (LDC) to rapidly communicate their urgent needs in an efficient manner, easily understood by decision-makers and the public.

According to the UNFCCC, the NAPA is built on existing grassroots coping strategies to identify prioritised activities. It also recognises local communities as the main stakeholders, and community-level information should therefore be given prominence in the NAPAs. They are designed to use existing information, and should be action-oriented and flexible.

Most NAPAs contain the following sections: Introduction and country context background; summary of existing plans and policies on vulnerability and adaptation; framework for adaptation program; assessment of main vulnerabilities; potential barriers to implementation; identification of priority adaptation needs; a list of adaptation activities and projects; ranking of priority areas; identification of most urgent needs; and implementation strategy.

The NAPA is developed by a multidisciplinary in-country team and the final product is submitted to the Global Environment Facility (GEF), UNFCCC and potential donors. As of March 2009, 39 of 49 LDCs have submitted NAPAs.

NAPAs and humanitarian action

The NAPAs are developed in a development context. However, since the NAPAs describe immediate and urgent needs, humanitarian actors may also consider the projects described in the NAPAs in their adaptation strategies. Furthermore, the NAPAs will provide lessons for how adaptation and mitigation activities should be targeted from a humanitarian perspective. This is particularly true when it comes to gender equality programming, which is an important principle for the humanitarian agencies and they can be on the forefront to promote this also in the NAPAs.

Analysis

OCHA's Gender Advisory Team conducted a review of the 39 available NAPAs. Three issues were considered: if gender-specific vulnerabilities were identified by the NAPA; if these vulnerabilities were addressed by projects, including gender equality programming in general; and how did men and women participate in the formulation of the NAPA.

The main findings are:

- Several of the NAPAs mention gender equality and women's empowerment as principle. However, none is able to demonstrate a clear commitment to these principles by mainstream gender throughout the Plans.
- About half of the NAPAs identify gender differentiated impact from climate change, and most of these recognise women as a particularly vulnerable group.



- Very few NAPAs demonstrate a commitment to gender equality through their projects, despite the fact that several state that gender equality and/or women's empowerment guided the project.
- Very few projects are dedicated to women as a vulnerable group.
- Participation by the community has been maintained, but many NAPAs fail to mention which community members were consulted.

Gender-specific Vulnerability

There is already documented evidence that climate change has and will have differential impact on women, girls, boys and men, and the population groups face distinct challenges. A good analysis and recognising that vulnerabilities are different, is therefore needed to enable an adequate and efficient response.

54 % NAPAs reviewed make some reference to gender differentiated impacts from climate change*. Most of the 21 emphasized the role of women. Here are some examples:

- Malawi concludes, "women bear the most of the burden in activities that are most impacted by adverse climate" (p. x).
- Uganda states, "climate change may affect men, women and the youth differently" (p. 3), while recognising that women are particularly vulnerable health-wise and at risk of reduced income generation due to their traditional role.
- Solomon Islands points out, "climate impacts that lead to changes in agricultural production will have a major and direct impact on women because of their central role in agricultural production. Their work could be made much harder, leading to less time for other activities and potentially forcing them to seek other sources of income to be able to provide food for the family." (p. 32)
- Tanzania highlights a concrete impact of climate change on women: the salinisation of drinking water forces them to walk further to collect water.

Gender equality programming

It is expected that identified vulnerabilities are addressed through targeted projects. As mentioned above, 54 % of the NAPAs recognise that gender roles enhance vulnerability to climate change. However, few of the project proposals address vulnerabilities based on gender. Only 8.5 % of the projects/programs are related to gender. In addition, several of the projects that do include a gender perspective, or include women as beneficiaries, are related to health, thereby reducing women's issues related to climate change to be only on health. Even though several of the NAPAs recognise women as particularly vulnerable to climate change, only 0.5 % of the projects/programs are specifically targeting women.

46 % of the NAPAs mention gender equality or women empowerment as a criterion in the project selection process. Five of these do not have a gender dimension in any of the outlined projects, meaning that in theory a total of 67 % of the NAPAs do reflect some kind of gender perspective. It is positive that so many have given attention to gender equality and women's empowerment in the process. However, in most cases these issues are not reflected in the end product: the prioritised projects.

Participation

Participation is a key word in the NAPA process, and most of the countries have consulted with a variety of stakeholders. The importance of also including women in this process is pointed out by the NAPA from Mauritania: "Women are often the chief guardians of vital local and traditional knowledge. Thus, they need to

* The number includes all references to gender, gender roles and sex, such as references to pregnant women.

be recognized as key stakeholders in the consultation and decision-making processes, even though they have not been represented in great numbers.” (p. 7)

49 % of the NAPAs explicitly point out that women and men have been consulted in the process. The NAPA from Bhutan states the “process promoted equal participation of both women and men right from the formation of the NAPA Taskforce”. (p. 12).

Recommendations

Based on the short analysis presented above, the following recommendations are made:

- Gender equality should always be a principal guiding the process, and a criterion when selecting projects for inclusion in the NAPA.
- Specific vulnerabilities for women, girls, boys and men should be identified and expressed in all NAPAs.
- Vulnerabilities described in the NAPA should be targeted in the projects, and be clearly outlined in the project objective.
- Gender should be mainstreamed in all projects, and beneficiaries should include both women and men (and girls and boys when appropriate).
- Projects should state beneficiary population disaggregated by sex and age.
- Women and men should participate and be represented in the process. Separate consultations should be held with women, to ensure effective participation.
- The NAPA should clearly inform who participated and at which level.